

2011 Sec 3 Language Arts

Personal essay

This I believe

She was hideous. I have embarrassed her too many times. She gave birth to her child, paying the price of beauty and pride. Having known her all my life, it wasn't until that day that I fully learnt from her what beauty really is. She is my aunt. She taught me that beauty comes from within, and this, I believe.

Many years ago, too many that I cannot even remember anymore, I had this recurring dream every night, of a monster with boils rising out her skin waving menacingly at me. It was of course, until many years later that I realised she meant no harm. But during those times, she was a nightmare that I could not fight off. Really, who could fault a three-year-old for being afraid of a monster-looking aunt.

Mum and dad always told me that good things would happen to the good while the bad would have retributions. *Well, then she must have been really bad*, I remembered thinking to myself back then. This obviously deepened my fear for her, as outrageous thoughts about how she would cook me in a cauldron if I angered her the slightest bit started brewing in my mind. I shunned her for years to come. But things changed from the day she appeared at my birthday party.

We were having the most awesome pool party you could ever imagine for my 12th birthday. She was nowhere in sight, and you have no idea how grateful I was for her "consideration". However, the sweet, sugar-coated dreams did not last and right at the climax of the party when I was opening my last present, she came rushing in, panting, with a present as hideous as her. Trust me, you would not be able to imagine how embarrassed I felt as I looked around and saw my friends throwing me dirty looks and whispering feverishly. I immediately threw the present down and ran out. I have never been more embarrassed.

Later that night amidst my sobs and all reasoning with me failed, my mother told me her story. It was eleven years ago, when my aunty was pregnant with my cousin that she developed a serious and rare skin condition that would require immediate medical attention and if not done, would cause disfiguration. However, treatment would mean an abortion was needed, and having conceived this child after so many years, my aunt decided that an abortion would be out of the question and gave up on treatment. The baby was safely delivered nine months later, but she was already unrecognisable by then.

After hearing her story and as years go pass, every time I look at her now, I see everything except for ugliness and question myself what I have done to this kindly soul due to my ignorance. She may be hideous as some superficial airheads might say, but she is beautiful, because she is on the inside. Someone who radiates love and kindness can never be ugly. Beauty is not defined by grotesquely sharp noses or even voluptuous bodies. It is really what you are on the inside and if you learn to accept who you are and have a kind heart, you are beautiful. You define beauty yourself and beauty comes from within. This, I believe.